

Message Text

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47

ACTION EA-14

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R 190835 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 401

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMCONSUL CAN THO

CINCPAC

AMCONSUL DANANG

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 6749

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PINT, VS

SUBJECT: SENATOR VU VAN MAU' S VIEW OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE
OPPOSITION

1. IN AN APRIL 17 CONVERSATION WITH AN EMBASSY OFFICER, UPPER
HOUSE OPPOSITION LEADER VU VAN MAU OFFERED THE FOLLOWING
REMARKS CONCERNING THE STATUS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY OPPOSITION
AT THE PRESENT JUNCTURE.

THE TROUBLE OF SENATOR THUAN

2. CONTRARY TO SOME REPORTS, MAU SAID, ONLY SENATORS TRAN QUANG
THUAN AND TON THAT NIEM HAVE LEFT THE BUDDHIST PARLIAMENTARY
LIASON GROUP. THUAN WAS EXPELLED BY THE BPLG' S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,
AND NIEM VOLUNTARILY WITHDREW AS A RESULT. MAU HAS SUBMITTED THE
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EXPULSION VOTE TO THE AN QUANG HIERARCHY FOR APPROVAL, AND HE HOPES THAT THE EXPULSION MOVE WILL " SLEEP IN THE FILE" WITHOUT FORMAL AN QUANG ACTION. IN THIS WAY, HE HINTED, THE DIFFICULTY COULD BE SMOOTHED OVER WITH TIME AND EVENTUALLY THUAN AND NIEM WOULD RETURN TO WORK WITH BPLG.

3. ASKED WHAT THE SOURCE OF THUAN' S DIFFICULTY WAS, MAU STRONGLY REJECTED THE IDEA THAT THE PROBLEM WAS REGIONAL. HE SAID THAT CENTRAL VIETNAMESE DEPUTIES WERE AMONG THOSE MOST STRONGLY CRITICAL OF THUAN AND HIS ALLEGED COZINESS WITH THE ADMINISTRATION. MAU DID NOT KNOW WHY THESE DEPUTIES DISLIKED THUAN; THERE WERE DEEP-SEATED PERSONAL ANTAGONISMS THAT HE COULD NOT FATHOM. FOR ONE THING, HE SAW THAT SOME DEPUTIES WERE JEALOUS OF THUAN' S " CLEVERNESS."

4. THE PROBLEMS FACED BY VENERABLE THIEN MINH WITHIN THE AN QUANG HIERARCHY ARE SIMILAR TO THOSE ENCOUNTERED BY THUAN, MAU BELIEVED. THIEN MINH TOO IS " CLEVER", AND THE OTHER BONZES RESENT THIS. MAU HOPED THAT THIEN MINH' S PROBLEMS COULD BE SMOOTHED OVER BY THE PROPER PERSONAL RELATIONS.

5. MAU WOULD NOT ACCEPT THE VIEW THAT THESE DIFFICULTIES HAD HARMED THE OPPOSITIONS' S NATIONAL POSTURE. HE POINTED TO THE LARGE NUMBER OF SIGNATORIES ON THE TWO TELEGRAMS SENT TO PRESIDENT NIXON AND THE U. S. CONGRESS (SAIGON 5649), ASSERTING THAT HIS SHOWED AMPLE SUPPORT FOR THE OPPOSITION VIEWPOINT.

AN QUANG AND QUOC TU

6. MAU WAS NOT HOPEFUL THAT THE CURRENT UNITY TALKS BETWEEN AN QUANG AND QUOC TU WOULD LEAD TO CONCRETE RESULTS. ALTHOUGH EVERYONE INVOLVED RECOGNIZES THAT UNITY WAS DESIRABLE IN " PRINCIPLE", THE PROBLEMS ARE TOO SEVERE. MAU CHARACTERIZED THE MAIN PROBLEM AS STRUCTURAL, IN THAT AN QUANG IS BASED ON A " VERTICAL" ORGANIZATION REACHING DOWN TO THE MASSES BUT LACKING A BROAD RANGE OF ORGANIZATIONS, WHILE QUOC TU HAS A " HORIZONTAL" ORGANIZATION BASED ON ASSOCIATIONS IN WHICH A FEW PROMINENT BUDDHISTS PARTICIPATE WITH LITTLE GRASS- ROOTS UNDERPINNING. JOINING THESE DISPARATE STRUCTURES, AND ESPECIALLY AGREEING ON THE DIVISION OF REPRESENTATION AND VOTES, WILL NOT BE EASY TO SAY THE LEAST.

7. COMMENT: MAU' S USE OF THE WORD " CLEVER" TO DESCRIBE BOTH SENATOR THUAN AND VENERABLE THIEN MINH MAY A VIETNAMESE WAY OF
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REFERRING TO WHAT IS CONSIDERED EXCESSIVE PERSONAL AMBITION AND THE
USE OF SOMETIME DEVIOUS METHODS TO PURSUE THOS AMBITIONS.
BUNKER

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BIEN HOA
CAN THO
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